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TAGS: KWBG PGOV PREL PTER IS

SUBJECT: PM FAYYAD AND CODEL ACKERMAN: SECURITY,  
CHECKPOINTS, AND SALARIES

Classified By: Acting Principal Officer Thomas M. Duffy, per reasons 1.  
4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (S) Summary. On August 29, PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad told CODEL Ackerman that the August 28 meeting between PA President Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and GoI PM Ehud Olmert was "positive, but general." He said that another meeting should be held soon to prepare for the November international meeting. Fayyad said that with GoI coordination, he will deploy security forces on West Bank streets. He said to improve Palestinians' mobility, the GoI must remove some West Bank checkpoints and road blocks. He said the PA can pay salaries only until the end of 2007 and asked CODEL Ackerman for USG financial support. Fayyad added that by dissolving 103 charitable organizations in the West Bank, he is attacking Hamas' financial infrastructure. End Summary.

Abu Mazen-Olmert Meeting Read-out

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¶2. (S) At an August 29 meeting in Ramallah with CODEL Ackerman (Reps. Gary Ackerman (D-NY) and John Hall (D-NY), PM Fayyad said that August 28 discussions between Abu Mazen and Olmert in Jerusalem were "positive, but general." He added, "I hesitate to express a strong sense of hope as this process will take a long time." Fayyad said borders and settlements pose a large challenge to negotiations, as "land swaps" have yet to be defined, there are settlements deep inside the West Bank, and any agreement must provide for a West Bank-Gaza land passage. Emphasizing the need for action prior to this fall's international meeting, Fayyad said another Abu Mazen-Olmert meeting should be held in coming weeks.

Security

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¶3. (C) On West Bank security, Fayyad said he wants to deploy several hundred security personnel in all major West Bank cities to control the streets. "If we start to regularly patrol the streets of Nablus," he explained, "we'll be able to keep the bad guys away." Fayyad said that while his Israeli counterparts agree this plan is logical, he is waiting to receive support from the GoI to ensure the deployment's success.

¶4. (S) Fayyad said ten days ago the PA gave the GoI a list of 260 fugitives, of whom the GoI approved 110. He said if his government does not deal with the fugitive problem immediately, it will be difficult to provide effective security. Fayyad said security is a prerequisite for political negotiations.

Checkpoints

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¶5. (C) Fayyad told CODEL Ackerman that the GoI must closely examine the 500-plus checkpoints and road blocks in the West Bank. He said that the removal of checkpoints in the West Bank is not a bilateral issue, but rather a decision that the GoI needs to make itself, and the GoI should move rapidly to remove some to restore a degree of mobility to Palestinians' daily lives.

Salaries

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¶6. (C) Fayyad said the PA has enough funds to pay salaries through the end of 2007. He stressed the need to continue paying salaries after this to "ensure what happened in Gaza does not happen in the West Bank." Fayyad asked CODEL Ackerman for USG financial assistance.

Hamas in Gaza

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¶7. (S) Fayyad told CODEL Ackerman that the June Hamas takeover of Gaza was primarily due to a command and control problem within the security forces. Fayyad said he sees no place for Hamas in the government and that the government will not engage Hamas unless it disarms completely and fully accepts the government's authority in Gaza. Fayyad added that by dissolving 103 charitable organizations in the West Bank, he is attacking Hamas' financial infrastructure.

¶8. (U) CODEL Ackerman did not have the opportunity to clear this cable.

DUFFY